



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

February 17, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

HB 6328 "An Act Concerning Timetables for Municipal Binding Arbitration"

Although the intent of HB 6328 is to implement "rigid timetables" within local compulsory binding arbitration, it is unclear how the language in this bill would accomplish such a goal.

CCM supports adjusting compulsory binding arbitration to establish strict timetables under the Municipal Employees Relations Act (MERA), similar to the rules established under the Teacher Negotiation Act (TNA). Therefore, CCM recommends that the committee adopt a strike all amendment to HB 6328 and insert language that would:

(1) Amend Section 7-473c (f) to read as follows;

(f) A municipal employer and a municipal employee organization may, at any time, file with the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration a joint stipulation modifying, deferring or waiving any or all of the provisions of this section, or modifying, deferring or waiving any or all of the provisions of a previously filed stipulation, and any such stipulation shall be controlling over the provisions of this section or of any previously filed stipulation; provided, however, that no modification of the timelines set forth in this section shall result in an award being issued more than one year after the date of imposition of arbitration in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

In most instances negotiations commences 180 days before the expiration of the contract. Binding arbitration is imposed thirty days after the expiration of a contract. This timeline would provide one year from that date for the conclusion

of negotiations or binding arbitration. In total this would provide 19 months to conclude negotiations.

(2) With regard to grievance arbitration, amend 31-98(a), second sentence to read:

If the decision is to be in writing, it shall be issued not more than 90 days following the close of the hearing, including submission of briefs, and a decision issued after that time shall have no legal effect.

As stated previously, Connecticut cannot go on conducting business as usual. Whether we like it or not, we are in an era of limits. Such amendments could limit the size of liabilities for retroactive pay and benefits and provide for a more orderly collective bargaining process. It is not unusual for collective bargaining processes to go on well beyond a year and for grievance arbitration awards to be awards issued multiple years after the filing of briefs.

CCM urges the committee to **amend HB 6328 as suggested above** and then, **favorably report** it.

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If you have any questions, please contact Bob Labanara at rlabanara@ccm-ct.org.